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Summary record of the 15th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 15 October at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Penke ..... (Latvia)
later: Ms. Hoosen (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (South Africa)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 104: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/C.3/64/L.2, L.11, L.12 and L.13)

Draft resolution A/C.3/4/L.2: Technical assistance for implementing the international conventions and protocols related to terrorism

1. **The Chairperson** invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.2, which had been recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council.

2. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee), presenting a statement of programme budget implications in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, said that the adoption of paragraphs 1 to 6 of the draft resolution would entail additional budgetary resources for the provision of technical assistance in implementing the international conventions and protocols related to terrorism. The level of voluntary contributions received in 2008 for the activities related to the Terrorism Prevention Branch amounted to $8.25 million. The level of extrabudgetary requirements for 2009 was estimated at $10 million. The full implementation of the activities set out in paragraphs 1 to 6 would therefore be subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources. A relatively small proportion of the activities would be carried out drawing on the regular budget allocations proposed under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011, section 16, subprogramme 1.

3. With regard to the provisions contained in paragraph 8, he noted that the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011, section 16, amounted to $38,258,800 at 2008-2009 rates. That represented an increase of $682,900, or 1.8 per cent, as compared with the revised appropriation for the biennium 2008-2009. The adoption of draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.2 therefore would not entail any programme budget implications. Lastly, he drew the attention of the Committee to General Assembly resolution 45/248 B, section VI, which reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee was the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibility for administrative and budgetary matters, and reaffirmed also the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

4. *Draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.2 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.11: Further steps to improve the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons

5. **Ms. Kolontai** (Belarus), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, said that the issue of human trafficking remained of serious concern to the international community. The report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons (A/64/290) had drawn attention to the challenges raised by the current economic crisis and the need for cooperation. The draft resolution focused on specific measures to implement previous resolutions; it was not intended to duplicate the latter. Its precise and logical language was intended to send a clear message outside the United Nations and to show unity and determination.

6. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Kyrgyzstan had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.12: Strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity

7. **Mr. Mogini** (Italy), introducing the draft resolution, said that criminal organizations undermined public institutions, the enjoyment of human rights and the functioning of the market. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols constituted the first universal instrument to address the problem. The draft resolution was intended to highlight the issue and press for a renewed political commitment, promote the universality and implementation of the Convention and the Protocols thereto, and confirm support for the technical assistance activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

8. The draft resolution updated those of previous years in several important respects, underlining the increasing links between transnational organized crime and other destabilizing factors. The text encouraged States to support the UNODC programme of technical assistance to Somalia as a response to piracy. It requested the Secretary-General to convene a special high-level meeting of the General Assembly on transnational organized crime and corruption, and to give prominence to the Convention and its Protocols in that connection. It further requested the Secretary-General to organize a high-level segment during the

fifth session of the Conference of Parties to the Convention to discuss ways of enhancing implementation.

9. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Benin, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Kyrgyzstan, Paraguay and the Republic of Korea had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.13: Preparations for the Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

10. **Mr. Perez** (Brazil) said that his country would host the Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which would be held in Salvador from 12 to 19 April 2010. Such congresses had been held every five years since 1955 and had helped promote novel thinking on a range of complex issues regarding the criminal justice system.

11. General Assembly resolution 63/193 had established the theme, provisional agenda, duration and location of the Twelfth Congress. Introducing draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.13, he said that it expressed support for the Congress and provided for additional steps towards its preparation. It underlined the relevance of regional preparatory meetings and workshops, the role of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and the importance of securing the necessary funds. The text was based on General Assembly resolution 59/151 on preparations for the Eleventh Congress.

12. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Honduras had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

Agenda item 105: International drug control (*continued*) (A/C.3/64/L.15)

Draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.15: International cooperation against the world drug problem

13. **Mr. Sánchez** (Mexico), introducing the draft resolution, said that it emphasized the shared responsibility of the international community in tackling drug trafficking. In comparison with previous resolutions on the topic, the current draft resolution sought to incorporate new elements addressed by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. In particular, it drew attention to the Political Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the Commission at its fifty-second session (A/64/92-E/2009/98). In order to monitor the question, the current draft resolution requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on its implementation to the General Assembly at its forthcoming session.

14. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that the following delegations had joined the sponsors: Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belize, Benin, Brazil, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Italy, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Monaco, Nigeria, Panama, Paraguay, the Republic of Korea, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

Agenda item 61: Social development (*continued*) (A/C.3/64/L.5)

Draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.5: Inclusion of persons with disabilities in realizing the Millennium Development Goals

15. **Ms. Kafanabo** (United Republic of Tanzania), introducing the draft resolution, said that persons with disabilities, who constituted some 10 per cent of the world's population, were often subjected to multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination. The draft resolution therefore provided recommendations to highlight their situation and include them in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals. In so doing, it sought to take advantage of the preparations for the 2010 review of the Millennium Development Goals.

16. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that the following delegations had joined the list of sponsors: Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chile, the Congo, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jordan, Malawi, Panama, Paraguay and Sri Lanka.

Agenda item 62: Advancement of women (*continued*) (A/C.3/64/L.3)

Draft decision A/C.3/64/L.3: Commemoration of the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action

17. **The Chairperson** invited the Committee to take action on draft decision A/C.3/64/L.3. The draft decision had been recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council and contained no programme budget implications.

18. *Draft decision A/C.3/64/L.3 was adopted.*

Agenda item 65: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/64/315)

(a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/64/172, A/64/182-E/2009/110 and A/64/254)

(b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children (*continued*) (A/64/285)

19. **The Chairperson** invited the Committee to resume its general discussion of agenda item 65 (a) and (b).

20. **Ms. Al Thani** (Qatar) said that, according to the Islamic sharia and Qatari social values, the rights of the child were best protected by upholding the rights and duties of the family, which was the basic unit of society. Children could not live without the family ties on which Islamic and Qatari society were founded. She therefore welcomed the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and in particular the Day of General Discussion held in September 2008 on the right to education in emergency situations.

21. Qatar had partially withdrawn its reservation to the Convention, which now applied only to articles 2 and 14. Her Government was preparing a draft law which would act as the mechanism for the protection and promotion of children's rights. Training programmes were in place to raise awareness of the Convention among staff working with children. A training manual connected the principles contained in the Convention with those of the tolerant Islamic sharia. Her Government had established the Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Women and Children, which received complaints and extended support to victims, including free legal assistance. Lastly, she appreciated the work of the Special Representative on Violence against Children and the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and hoped that both would draw attention to the tragedy of children living under foreign occupation.

22. *Ms. Hoosen (South Africa), Vice-Chairperson, took the chair.*

23. **Ms. Andamo** (Thailand) said that her country had launched the National Agenda for Children and Youth 2007-2016 to parallel the initiatives of the United Nations in support of the rights of the child. Her Government had pledged to eliminate illiteracy among Thai children by 2012 and had made it a priority to provide children with free education for the first 15 years. Thailand had eliminated the disparity between boys and girls in primary and secondary education. In 2005, a Cabinet resolution had provided for the right of children without legal status to education at all levels. Outreach campaigns were being conducted to inform local officials of those rights.

24. The Ministry of Education planned to spend some $75 million over three years to offer standard education to some 200,000 underprivileged children. In August 2009, the Ministry of Education had issued a law providing that all children with disabilities would receive compulsory education free of charge, including at the university level. The Government was working to teach children about human rights, notably through the Human Rights Caravan, which had been organized in cooperation with the United Nations Country Team in Thailand. Interfaith and intercultural dialogue were also promoted among Thai youth. Education and capacity-building would help combat poverty and give youth a sense of ownership over social development.

25. For the first time, Thailand was now represented in two United Nations treaty bodies, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. In the forthcoming year, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security would lead a working group to establish a commission on the protection and promotion of the rights of women and children within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

26. **Ms. Belskaya** (Belarus) said that her country shared the concern of the Secretary-General that as a result of the global financial crisis, millions more children might be thrown into poverty and further deprivation. Because of the crisis, it was especially important that Member States fulfil their obligations according to the Declaration and Plan of Action contained in the "World Fit for Children" document. Belarus had assumed specific obligations in that regard, through its national plan of action for children for the period 2004-2010 and three wide-ranging programmes for children and young people. It had set up a national agency for the protection of children's rights, and a National Commission on the Rights of the Child, which coordinated the work of Government authorities and non-governmental organizations in implementing programmes for children and families.

27. At the regional level, committees with representation from Government and non-governmental agencies worked to resolve family problems and protect children's rights. The steps taken since Belarus had become independent to improve maternal and child welfare had resulted in a threefold reduction in child mortality since 1991, to one of the lowest rates in the region. Medicines were free of charge for children suffering from a range of serious diseases, including tuberculosis, blood diseases, cancer and diabetes. In the past 10 years, there had been a decline of 46.4 per cent in endocrine diseases and in digestive and metabolic disorders in children under 14. Belarus had a sophisticated welfare support system for families with children, including child benefits payable up to the age of 18. The Government covered 40 per cent of the cost of children's meals in preschool institutions, and also financed childcare and medical and psychological support services for children.

28. The Government of Belarus paid special attention to the most vulnerable children. There were 143 specialist centres providing medical and psychological support for children under 3. Priority was given to ensuring equal rights to education for all children, regardless of their state of health and cognitive ability. Sixty per cent of children with special psychophysical needs were being educated in ordinary schools. Orphans and children deprived of parental care received extra benefits and support, including guaranteed entry to higher and specialist education, rent-free accommodation while studying, a guaranteed first job and social housing if they lacked housing of their own. Children living in the areas affected by the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant were treated at sanatoria and health resorts free of charge and received an annual medical check-up and free school meals.

29. The fundamental rights of children and the arrangements for protecting them were laid down in Belarusian law. A child whose rights were infringed could make a complaint to the National Commission on the Rights of the Child, the guardianship authorities or the public prosecutor, and from the age of 14 to the courts, acting either in person or through a legal representative. To ensure that international standards were observed, the Government was planning a system of special courts to hear cases involving minors. Under the new Law on Granting Refugee Status, Complementary and Temporary Protection to Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons in the Republic of Belarus, in force since July 2009, those facing the risk of the death penalty or torture in their country of nationality would not be forcibly returned to it or expelled, and children with refugee status or entitled to complementary protection would have the same right to preschool and general education and to medical treatment as local children.

30. Child trafficking and associated criminality was a cause of special concern for Belarus. The most effective way of tackling it would be to develop and adopt a global plan of action to combat human trafficking as a whole. Stamping out child trafficking called for coordinated efforts by Member States, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations system agencies, civil society, business circles and the mass media. Her Government supported the recommendations and conclusions of the report by the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children (A/64/290), with its emphasis on the need for physical and psychological rehabilitation and social reintegration for child victims of any form of mistreatment or abuse, and for children affected by armed conflict. She also welcomed the appointment by the Secretary-General of a Special Representative on Violence against Children, which she hoped would give fresh impetus to global efforts to prevent and root out all forms of violence against children.

31. **Mr. Shwaikh** (Iraq) said that his country had been an active participant in international humanitarian initiatives. In late 2008, a meeting had been held in Baghdad in order to conduct a midterm review of the 2007-2010 Programme of Cooperation between the Government of Iraq and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Despite difficult conditions, UNICEF worked in complete independence to improve services to women and children.

32. The meeting had resulted in several recommendations. In order to improve interface with local authorities, the UNICEF office in Iraq should be reopened. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had a vital role to play in coordinating between UNICEF and Government agencies. In order to minimize financial and administrative costs, workshops should be organized in Iraq rather than abroad. An improved awareness of the aims of UNICEF over the following biennium would help establish a clear and easily implementable strategy.

33. Many potential staff members in Iraq had the necessary capacities and were closely acquainted with the situation of children on the ground. However, the workshops organized by UNICEF outside the country had often fallen below the required standard. The subject matter had often been excessively theoretical, touching only briefly on the practical dimension. A number of projects had been enacted too swiftly, without allowing time for examination by the competent Ministries, which would have made it possible to consider the views of the Iraqi party and gain prior agreement. It would be helpful to know the budget for UNICEF activities in order to determine programmes for Iraq.

34. **Mr. Merabet** (Algeria) said that the current economic crisis risked weakening States' commitment to the rights of the child. The international community's failure to act could jeopardize the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. Statistics for Africa showed that without substantial assistance for health and education, malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS would remain widespread, and education would be a chimera for millions of children.

35. Algeria had acceded to the principal international instruments on that issue, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols as well as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and had enshrined many of the relevant provisions in its national legislation. The Government had for over a year been implementing a national strategy on the family and a national plan for children.

36. His country was actively combating child labour, child prostitution and trafficking in children, particularly girls. The Nationality Code had been amended to grant nationality to children born to Algerian mothers. Government investment in infrastructure, combined vaccination and preventive campaigns, had helped curb child mortality. The national education budget was comparatively large. In 2008-2009, school attendance rates had reached 97 per cent. His Government hoped that universal school attendance would soon be achieved.

37. **Ms. Štiglic** (Slovenia) said that the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child provided an ideal opportunity to add a communications procedure to the Convention. She stressed that consensus and partnership between Governments, international organizations and civil society, including children, were needed to make children's right to a healthy and secure environment a reality.

38. States bore most of the responsibility for empowering children. Accordingly, her Government had made the promotion of children's rights a priority, including in international forums, for example during its current chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and membership on the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Board. It took a special interest in the issues of violence against children, children in armed conflict, human rights education and the empowerment of children. She commended the Working Group of the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict for its work and welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 1882 (2009) on children and armed conflict.

39. At the national level, a draft Family Code that put children's rights at the centre of the family, prohibited corporal punishment and provided for the establishment of the office of a children's advocate, was under discussion. The Family Violence Prevention Act, in force since May 2008, likewise underscored the importance of the best interests of children. Celebrations of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child had been held across the country, and her Government had hosted an International Conference on Children's Rights and Protection against Violence in October of that year during its chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. In the belief that human rights education helped improve societies, it funded human rights education projects in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Ossetia.

40. **Mr. Pálsson** (Iceland) said that the twentieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child provided an opportunity for States to renew their commitment to children's rights and implementation of the Convention. While progress had been made, many problems remained, including early marriage, child labour, sexual abuse, exploitation, trafficking and corporal punishment. The current economic crisis threatened to further slow or even erode progress made towards implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, all of which directly affected children, as well as the goals in the "World Fit for Children" document.

41. Progress had been made in poverty reduction and education, but more than 75 million children, 55 per cent of them girls, still were not enrolled in primary school, and access to secondary education remained unsatisfactory. Every year 6 million children under 5 years of age still died as a result of preventable diseases and poor neonatal care. Malnutrition levels appeared to be rising, exacerbated by the economic crisis and high food prices.

42. Poverty reduction, education and improved access to food and water were worthy goals in their own right but also helped prevent conflict. He deplored the fact that children continued to be recruited by armed groups as well as groups associated with terrorism and organized crime but noted that the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict, in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund and other United Nations agencies, had led to the release of numerous child soldiers and increased awareness of the dire situation of children in conflict situations. The Security Council should follow up its resolution 1882 (2009) and devote special attention to conflict situations where the parties were involved in recruitment or the killing and maiming of children and sexual violence against them.

43. **Mr. Pournajaf** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his Government prioritized the moral and intellectual development of children and the promotion of dialogue among children to foster tolerance and an appreciation for diversity. The theme of 2009 International Youth Day had been sustainability, a very current topic given the threat posed by climate change. His Government was committed to increasing awareness among children of the challenge of sustainability and their responsibilities as future leaders. The lack of data on children, families and migration made it difficult to assess the full implications of migration for children. A proper mechanism should be created to increase awareness of the positive effects of migration and combat xenophobia in destination countries.

44. Armed conflict affected children's physical, mental and emotional development. The impact of armed conflict on children could not be fully understood without looking at its effects on women, families and communities, all of which contributed to a secure environment for children. Education played a crucial part in meeting the needs of children in conflict and post-conflict situations by shaping and structuring their lives and instilling values. States should strive to give prominence to the rights of children affected by armed conflict, in particular girl children, whose families might not welcome them back if, for example, they had suffered sexual abuse.

45. Cultures were not homogeneous or static, and children were as diverse as their cultures. Children's influence on culture was more visible than on the economy or politics; their enthusiasm could contribute to remedying outdated or harmful aspects of their culture. A child's background contributed to their personal ethos. The key to success in enabling children to promote development was to accept their cultural heritage and work in partnership with them.

46. **Ms. Sow** (Senegal) said that the situation of children and the suffering and abuse that they endured, exacerbated by the economic and food crises, must be given particular attention by the international community. Her Government had put children's issues at the centre of legal and institutional reforms, increased funding for child-related measures and entered into partnerships with civil society and United Nations agencies, in particular UNICEF, to implement coordinated strategies for children and share the costs thereof.

47. Progress had been made in the areas of health, education and protection. Children participated in the formulation of policies and programmes concerning them. They had, for example, contributed to the NGO submission relating to Senegal's periodic report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Children's parliaments existed at all levels of government. Children had been consulted in context of the Secretary-General's study on violence against children (A/62/209) and were represented in the national coalition of children's NGOs.

48. Children's issues were taken into account in Senegal's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, sectoral plans for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the national health sector development plan, the strategic plan to combat HIV/AIDS and mechanisms to protect children in vulnerable situations, for example early domestic labour, dangerous work, especially in the agriculture and fishing sectors, and children forced to beg for a living.

49. New legislation had been adopted to ensure implementation of the Plan of Action in the "World Fit

for Children" document. Thanks to the concerted efforts of her Government, civil society, the private sector, international partners and children themselves, significant progress had been made but much remained to be done to fully implement the goals contained in that document.

50. **Mr. Tan** Li Lung (Malaysia) said that the rights of children must be among the priorities of every country's development agenda. In the developing countries, many problems faced by children were closely related to underdevelopment, poverty and conflict. Those issues must therefore be addressed and the countries concerned provided with adequate resources in order to ensure continued progress in the promotion of children's rights.

51. At the national level, the Child Act of 2001 took into account the principles enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and provided protection to and care for children without discrimination on any grounds whatsoever. The Second National Plan of Action for Children 2001-2020 coordinated the efforts of government agencies, civil society and international partners, in particular UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO), in a framework for meeting the social and developmental needs of children and promoting their rights.

52. Under the 2006-2010 five-year plan for development, about 21 per cent of State spending had been allocated for education and training. The Education Development Master Plan 2006-2010 was aimed at ensuring that all children, whatever their background, had equal access to educational opportunity. Education support measures included: loans for textbooks, food plans, trust funds for students from poor families, scholarships, transportation assistance, allowances for disabled children, life jackets, tuition assistance and hostel lodging for disadvantaged students.

53. Children with special needs were accommodated in 28 national schools, two secondary schools and two vocational secondary schools, or integrated into 973 regular schools. Curriculum was modified in both types of schools to meet the requirements of children with special needs. Malaysia had achieved Millennium Development Goal 2, universal primary education, in 1990. Gender parity in education had been achieved by 2005 and girls currently represented 60 per cent of students in higher education.

54. A full range of health services was available to children, including the disabled and children with special needs, and to pregnant women. School health teams had been established. Infant mortality had been reduced to 6.3 deaths per 1,000 live births. Mechanisms had been established to protect children from violence: child abuse and neglect teams had been set up at hospitals, and there was a 24-hour hotline to report suspected cases of abuse. Child protection teams and child activity centres had been established at the state and district levels to promote community-based prevention and rehabilitation programmes for vulnerable children especially. His Government continued to work with civil society to forge smart partnerships to protect the rights of children.

55. Violence against children could never be justified. Poverty, income inequality, political instability and conflict were some of the many factors that could increase the risk of violence. The international community must address those issues, including with regard to children whose rights were denied due to conflict, including children living under foreign occupation.

56. **Ms. Mwaffisi** (United Republic of Tanzania) underscored her Government's commitment to the protection of the rights of children. A Law of the Child Act, currently awaiting second reading in Parliament, would harmonize national legislation with international instruments ratified by her country, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and International Labour Organization Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. In recognition of the multisectoral nature of the problems facing children in early life, her Government had adopted a holistic and integrated approach to early childhood development, which was reflected in the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty.

57. Significant progress had been made in the reduction of infant and under-5 mortality rates through the provision of vitamin A supplements, expanded immunization, child illness management, promotion of breastfeeding, the distribution of free insecticide-treated bednets to combat malaria and dispensing of antiretrovirals and antimalaria medication. Child mortality and morbidity rates, nevertheless, remained

high, and more needed to be done to expand those services and reach all those in need.

58. Education was a key to development. Her Government had abolished primary school fees, which had led to 97 per cent enrolment rates and gender parity at the primary level. Secondary schools had been built in all wards, and fees significantly reduced. In Zanzibar, a 10-year basic education cycle made up of seven years of primary school and three years of secondary school had been established. The challenge was to ensure attendance and retention of all children enrolled.

59. Her Government was cooperating with UNICEF in a country-wide study on violence against children. Since families played an important role in combating violence against children, the child dimension had been included in the ongoing "Say No to Violence against Women" campaign. There was a children's helpline, and community policing and justice facilitation teams had been established to increase access to justice in communities, for children in particular.

60. Many challenges remained to be overcome if children's rights were to be fully implemented, including poverty, the lack of infrastructure in a vast country, inadequate human and financial resources and insufficient data and research on children. Partnership between the Government, civil society and the private sector in a democratic society based on the rule of law and respect for human rights would facilitate efforts to overcome those obstacles. International cooperation, including debt forgiveness, was also essential in order to make sufficient resources available to address the concerns of children. Lastly, she commended the Organization for its work to combat violence against children and welcomed the appointment of a Special Representative on Violence against Children. Her delegation would continue to work with the international community to carry out pledges and commitments to bring about a world fit for children.

61. **Ms. Halabi** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that over the previous 40 years, her country had made significant progress in child health, education and protection. Life expectancy had increased notably, while child and maternal mortality had declined. Vaccination rates had increased, primary health coverage had expanded, and emergency first aid was more readily available. A comprehensive strategy was in place to improve primary education. The Ministry of Education had enacted a range of policies and measures in that connection. The 2005 National Plan for the Protection of the Child was intended to establish an effective framework to protect children from abuse, neglect and exploitation. The concepts of children's rights and child protection were both being included in school curricula.

62. However, children living under Israeli occupation were subjected to numerous human rights violations. In the occupied Syrian Golan, they endured difficult conditions and were deprived of physical and psychological safety and stability. For example, landmines planted by the Israeli Army in 1967 had cost the lives of 217 innocent children. The closure of Arabic schools and the imposition of Israeli curricula and citizenship constituted an attempt to eliminate the national identity of the young generation. Such abuses took place in a climate of impunity, and the perpetrators felt themselves to be above the law. She hoped that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children would avoid discrimination, selectivity and double standards in working to develop a comprehensive strategy for the elimination of violence against children.

63. **Ms. AlShahail** (Saudi Arabia) said that, drawing on Arab and Islamic values, her country's Basic Law guaranteed the rights of the child and provided for free education. The National Commission for Children, established in 1979, coordinated efforts in a range of areas including education, health and social care. The Ministry of Justice was working to regulate the marriage of minor women in order to safeguard their rights and eliminate negative practices in that regard. The draft legislation enjoyed the full support of academics and judicial and legal experts.

64. Her country had acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1997. The National Commission for Children was composed of 12 members from several ministries. A number of strategies and programmes were in place to provide childcare, and a database had been established to collect and exchange relevant information.

65. Saudi Arabia was party to several other relevant instruments, including the International Labour Organization Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour; the Arab Charter on Human Rights adopted by the League of Arab

States; and Charter on the Rights of the Child in Islam adopted by the Organization of the Islamic Conference. She hoped that the international community would take action to protect the rights of Palestinian children, which were being violated as a result of the Israeli occupation.

66. **Ms. Al-Zibdeh** (Jordan) said that 193 States were now parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The universality of the rights of all children was thus well established. However, 200 million children were in employment. Jordan had made it a priority to combat child labour, having ratified the relevant international instruments and adopted domestic legislation and strategies accordingly. It was essential to tackle the root causes of the problem, namely poverty and lack of education. The current economic crisis risked worsening the situation, particularly for girls, who were often the first to be taken out of school. Universal primary education would eliminate child labour and end the cycle of poverty.

67. Her country saw education as a long-term investment. Education was compulsory and free in Government schools. Some 12 per cent of the national budget, or 4.1 per cent of the gross domestic product, was allocated to education. Jordan was working to eliminate the gender gap: 98 per cent of girls now completed primary and secondary school. As part of the "My School" programme, renovations had been carried out in over 500 schools across the country. Jordan encouraged Member States to support the 1 Goal Global Campaign for Education, one of whose founders was Queen Rania of Jordan. The campaign was aimed at empowering 75 million children and would cover numerous States until the end of the 2010 International Federation of Association Football World Cup.

68. **Ms. Sabja Daza** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that the Convention on the Rights of the Child was directly applicable in Bolivian courts. In keeping with her Government's new approach to children's rights based on comprehensive protection, children and adolescents were no longer seen as merely requiring compassion or discipline but rather were viewed as rights holders. The 1999 Code on Children and Adolescents had introduced legal measures and regulations to promote the best interests of all children and adolescents without exception and ensure that they participated in and benefited from social and economic development. The new Constitution contained 120 articles dealing with human rights, including those enshrined in the Convention.

69. The 2006 National Development Plan provided for comprehensive child-oriented policies to reduce malnutrition, illiteracy and violence. Since 26.5 per cent of children under the age of 5 suffered from chronic malnutrition, her Government had launched the "Zero Malnutrition" programme in 2007 to provide food supplements to mothers with children between the ages of 2 and 5, in particular in poor communities. As part of that programme, meals had also been provided to 111,285 schoolchildren in poor communities in 2008, and the Juana Azurduy voucher programme had helped lower maternal and child mortality and chronic malnutrition in children under the age of 2. The Universal Health Insurance Act and Intercultural Community and Family Health Programme devoted special attention to the specific needs of indigenous farmers in rural areas.

70. Child labour affected children's education, health and development. Factors leading to child labour included unemployed parents, poverty, parents' low educational level, family break-up and leaving home. Children frequently worked in the early morning then attended school later, but usually did not succeed and dropped out before the end of primary school. Article 61 of the new Constitution therefore prohibited forced labour for and exploitation of children. The Juancito Pinto voucher programme had been established for children up to the eighth year of primary school to encourage them to stay in school; in 2008 1.8 million children had received assistance. The "Yes I can" programme had been established to eliminate illiteracy.

71. Her Government was implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child through holistic measures aimed at benefiting not only children but also families and communities. It was likewise committed to meeting the Millennium Development Goals relating to children and implementing the Declaration and the Plan of Action contained in the "World Fit for Children" document.

72. **Ms. Hong** Wook-jin (Republic of Korea) said that the world had surely become a better place for children since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The twentieth anniversary of the Convention provided an opportunity to map new ways to protect children's rights, in particular by addressing disparities between groups of children. The current economic and

food crises were increasing malnutrition for children and affecting their access to health care and education, which would have long-term consequences for their development. Poverty also made children more vulnerable to involvement in prostitution and drug trafficking. The international community must do more to protect children; if it did not, it would probably fail to overcome the effects of the economic crisis itself.

73. The complexity of armed conflict situations made children vulnerable to exploitation. She therefore called on all States to comply with the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (the Paris Principles and Paris Commitments). Violence against girl children in conflict situations was a particular concern, and she was especially disturbed by reports of sexual abuse of children by United Nations peacekeepers and international aid workers. She therefore called for implementation of Security Council resolution 1882 (2009), in particular with regard to the monitoring and reporting mechanism.

74. The protection gap for different groups of children could be filled through partnerships among United Nations agencies, States and NGOs. Her delegation welcomed the Organization's efforts to collaborate on common goals, support vulnerable children and reduce disparities in children's access to their rights. She noted the signing in September 2009 of a framework agreement between her Government and UNICEF, which would strengthen its collaboration in support of the world's children. Her delegation also welcomed the appointment of a Special Representative on Violence against Children, whose work would help marginalized children who were exposed to violence and exploitation.

75. **Ms. Werdaningtyas** (Indonesia) said that, two decades after the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the statistics on child mortality, malnutrition and access to education and health care remained sobering. The challenges faced by children could be overcome if the international community took concrete and practical action based on a holistic approach that addressed the root causes of those challenges. The 2010 review of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals would provide an opportunity to continue improving the situation of children and implement the framework set out in the "World Fit for Children" document.

76. The immediate effects of the world economic crisis on children must be addressed, for example, by protecting family incomes or meeting nutritional needs. In the medium to long term, the international community must not lose sight of the fact that children's rights were synonymous with those of women in such areas as health care, protection from violence and development. Education was a vital tool for breaking the cycle of poverty and the key to the empowerment of children. Special attention must likewise be given to protecting children in situations of armed conflict and taking children's and women's needs into account in peace processes.

77. Her Government was implementing the Convention and the World Fit for Children Declaration through its National Programme for Indonesian Children 2015. More funds were being allocated to meet the needs of children: the education budget had almost doubled in 2008 and despite the crisis the constitutionally mandated allocation of 20 per cent of the budget to education had been maintained. Child mortality was decreasing steadily. The national budget allocation for HIV/AIDS had risen seven-fold between 2006 and 2009, while provincial and district budgets in that area had increased by 350 per cent. Much emphasis was placed on increasing public awareness, which was a vital measure to protect children.

78. Five cities were participating in the "City for Children" pilot project aimed at creating a safe and positive environment for children, which would serve as a basis for a nation-wide programme. Police stations had special units for the protection of women and children, and every province had comprehensive centres to promote the empowerment of women and children. National legislation went beyond the provisions of ILO Convention No. 182, and a National Commission for the Protection of Children had been established. Action plans had been implemented to combat the worst forms of child labour and eliminate the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

79. A holistic approach to promoting children's health, safety and development must begin by protecting the situation of mothers and ensuring access to a clean environment and safe drinking water. In order to break the cycle of poverty, there must also be a continuum from early childhood development to universal school attendance for boys and girls.

80. **Ms. Tawk** (Lebanon) said that her delegation welcomed the appointment of the Special Representative on Violence against Children and the adoption of Security Council resolution 1882 (2009) on children and armed conflict. Most of the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child were reflected in Lebanese legislation, and reforms aimed at complying with all its provisions were under way. Education was compulsory and free for children up to the age of 12, including children with disabilities. Her Government believed strongly in education as the foundation for growth and in an informed citizenry as a key to achieving other development goals. It was also committed to providing basic health care and reducing child and maternal mortality rates. It had strengthened its health programme and promoted children's health and mothers' pre and post-natal health.

81. Poverty, the greatest threat to children's development, had been exacerbated by the current economic crisis. Her Government had launched a social action plan in 2007 aimed at social and economic reform and improving the living conditions of the poorest and most vulnerable groups, including poor households and large families, which were faced with additional financial burdens at the beginning of a school year and whose children were most at risk of dropping out of school and starting to work at an early age.

82. The Higher Council for Childhood, a branch of the Ministry of Social Affairs, provided a liaison between civil society and Government ministries and initiated and coordinated programmes and policies, for example, with regard to bringing Lebanese legislation into conformity with the Convention. The juvenile justice system had been reformed to emphasize education and rehabilitation rather than punishment. Several initiatives had been launched to implement article 12 of the Convention on children's right to be heard, including a plan of action to promote children's participation in society. She underscored the importance of participation as an empowering process and the need to ensure participation by underprivileged children in particular.

83. No violence against children could be tolerated. Children must be protected in particular from the horrors of armed conflict, including foreign occupation, in accordance with the provisions of international humanitarian law. The most direct threat to Lebanese children, especially in south Lebanon, stemmed from unexploded ordnance, which would take years to clear. Since 2006, hundreds of civilians, including children, had been killed, maimed or wounded by such devices, mostly by cluster munitions dropped indiscriminately by Israel in civilian areas. Her delegation condemned the killing of any child and looked forward to the day when the children of the region could live together in safety and peace.

84. **Mr. Gunda** (Malawi) said that the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols remained the principle instruments pertaining to children and that his Government continued to meet its reporting obligations under the Convention. Despite progress made towards implementation of children's rights, gaps remained and gains made in protecting children's rights could be threatened by the international economic crisis and climate change. He therefore welcomed the event organized by the Committee on the rights of the Child to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Convention, entitled "Dignity, Development and dialogue ... More to be done", held in Geneva on 8 to 9 October 2009, which had provided important guidance for the international community on the direction to take in order to make the world fit for children. He also urged States to implement the recommendations of the Secretary-General's study on violence against children.

85. His Government had made considerable efforts to promote healthy lives for children through huge investments in the health sector. Measures in that regard included distribution of vitamin A and Iron supplements, de-worming, nutrition education, distribution of vita-meal packets to malnourished children, and a school meal programme. Immunization coverage remained steady at 82 per cent, thereby decreasing infant and child mortality, and insecticide-treated bednets continued to be distributed to prevent malaria. The number of sites offering voluntary counselling and testing to help prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS had more than doubled since 2007 and antiretrovirals were provided to those infected.

86. His Government recognized that education, science and technology were the foundations of socio-economic development. Free primary education had been provided since 1994, significantly increasing enrolment rates, in particular for girls. The Education Sector Support Programme had been established to improve the quality of education. Measures under that Programme included the provision of basic medicines

and a nutrition package to primary schools, rehabilitation of public universities and the construction of a university of science and technology. Malawi had also opened 40 girls' hostels in 10 secondary schools, renovated 4 secondary schools and opened a teachers' training college. Pursuant to the 2005-2009 National Plan of Action for Orphans, secondary school fees had been paid for over 11,000 orphans and vulnerable children, and the "Local Cash Transfer Scheme" had assisted nearly 50,000 children, most of them orphans.

87. He welcomed the appointment of a Special Representative on Violence against Children. At the national level, measures to protect children included the adoption of a bill on childcare, protection and justice; review of the Adoption of Children Act; and implementation of the "Stop Harming and Exploiting Children" project, which focused on providing a safe environment for children, in particular the most vulnerable.

88. In the belief that children should stay in school, his Government had ratified ILO Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour. Programmes had been implemented to eradicate hazardous work for children, increase awareness and keep children in school. Poverty eradication programmes also provided entrepreneurial training and microcredit to families and ensured social protection for children. Lastly, he underscored his delegation's commitment to the survival, protection and development of children. Deeper and wider partnerships with civil society and the international community would be necessary to realize the promises made to children the world over.

89. **Mr. Olhaye** (Djibouti) expressed satisfaction at the considerable progress made by the international community towards protecting the rights of children, who were particularly vulnerable to abuse, violence and drugs. His Government had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols and welcomed the efforts of ILO to develop standards relating to child abuse and exploitation. According to the 2006 ILO Global Report: The end of child labour: Within reach, child labour had declined by 11 per cent from 2000-2004, in particular in the area of hazardous work. Much of the progress made had come in Latin America, where Governments had invested heavily in education and improving social services.

90. Regrettably sub-Saharan Africa continued to have the highest child work ratio, 26.4 per cent, due in part to population growth but also to the impact of HIV/AIDS on the labour force, which meant children had to work out of economic necessity, depriving them of education and appropriate care. The current economic, food and fuel crises would exacerbate the effects of underdevelopment, HIV/AIDS infection, agriculture dependency and armed conflict, forcing more and more children into the workforce, particularly girls. As a result, growth and development would be reduced in Africa.

91. Some 75 million African children, almost half of whom were in sub-Saharan Africa, did not attend school, and 55 per cent of that total were girls. Unless Governments could maintain their expenditures for social services, households would have to take up the burden, which would fall heaviest on women and girls. International aid and technical assistance must therefore be maintained at agreed-upon levels. The situation of armed conflict in Africa and the use of child soldiers also deserved special attention. The economic downturn had left many youth idle, making them susceptible to recruitment by military bands. The international community must address that problem, for example by controlling the flow of arms and identifying and bringing to justice those responsible.

Statement made in exercise of the right of reply

92. **Mr. Rakovskiy** (Russian Federation), speaking in reply to the representative of Georgia concerning the events of August 2008 in South Ossetia, said that his delegation deplored the effects of those events on the population of the region. He welcomed the recent release of the report of the European Union-commissioned Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia, which stated that Georgia's illegal aggression against South Ossetia had been the cause of the conflict. He hoped that the report's findings would settle the issue of responsibility for the outbreak of conflict and help prevent renewed conflict in the area. Member States could consult the report, which was available in its entirety on the Internet. It was unacceptable that the party identified in the report as being responsible for the outbreak of hostilities could claim to be the victim and try to blame others for its own errors.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.